

# Fact and Opinion

by Stephan MacLEOD

**FACT:** In 1999, the Canadian furniture industry was comprised of 1,748 establishments that employed 86,052 and shipped goods valued at \$9.7 billion.

**OPINION:** Their sole purpose was to rid Canada of its beaver and woodpecker populations through the manufacture of furniture.

**FACT:** While the number of establishments between 1990 and 1999 decreased by 32%, from 2,571 to 1,748, total employment actually increased by 56.5%, from 70,869 to 86,052.

**OPINION:** Arts Majors from across the country can look forward to good jobs thanks to the Canadian furniture industry.

**FACT:** Employment has now reached a point where the average establishment size in the industry has increased by nearly 69% in only 9 years. These larger firms are more productive, and, by exploiting economies of scale, are better able to compete in international markets.

**OPINION:** There is no stopping the

Canadian furniture industry in its quest for world domination. They control our supply of tables and chairs. If it weren't for them, we would be eating off the floor like a bunch of Frenchmen.

**FACT:** The industry is heavily concentrated in central Canada with Ontario, accounting for about 54% of industry shipments of manufactured goods, 36% of establishments, and 48% of employment. Quebec accounts for about 26% of industry shipments of goods, 28% of employment, and 37% of establishments.

**OPINION:** I hear they have fancy living rooms in central Canada. In Ontario, couches aren't covered in plastic and cat piss like they are in the Prairies.

**FACT:** In 1999, industry shipments were \$9.7 billion, of which 68.5% were exports. In the same year, the Canadian market for furniture was \$6.5 billion of which 46.8% was supplied by the domestic industry and the balance by imports.

**OPINION:** The secret to the success of

the Canadian furniture industry is that one out of every ten Lazyboys has a live squirrel inside its cushioning.

**FACT:** Canadian production comprises 38% household furniture (including mattresses), 43% office and institutional furniture, 16% wood kitchen cabinets and counter tops, and 3% other manufactured products (blinds and shades).

**OPINION:** Back in the 1930s, 90 percent of the production of Canadian furniture was comprised of chairs for lion tamers.

**FACT:** The export orientation of Canadian furniture firms (exports as a percentage of shipments) increased from 32.1% in 1992 to 68.5% in 1999.

**OPINION:** The world loves Canadian furniture because it is less spicy than Mexican furniture.

**FACT:** Canada exported \$7.6 billion worth of furniture in 2000—growing at an average annual rate of more than 22% over the 1990s. The U.S. continues to represent Canada's single largest export market, accounting for about 97% in 2000.

**OPINION:** It was a Canadian who first introduced furniture to the United States. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, I'm talking about John Candy.

**FACT:** Canada is the 4th largest exporter of furniture in the world and the number one exporter of furniture to the United States.

**OPINION:** Maybe that's why we beat them at hockey.

**FACT:** The trade balance in Furniture and Fixtures steadily improved, year after year, from a deficit of \$133 million in 1991 to a surplus of \$4.2 billion in 2000.

**OPINION:** The introduction of wheels on computer chairs saved the Canadian furniture industry. That and the branching out into organized crime.

**FACT:** Between 1992 and 2000, exports of Canadian furniture increased by 405%.

**OPINION:** Why is it that lumberjacks and carpenters are billionaires, while our cultural elite must dig in dumpsters to find their next meal?

## CADRE POETRY ISSUE

The *Cadre* poetry issue will be appearing! Soon! All UPEI students, professors and staff are heavily encouraged/threatened to send in their poetry. Deadline for poems is March 29th. Experience is not necessary, nor is rhyming or especially good grammar, though we do not frown on these things. Poems can be dropped off at the *Cadre* office (Main 06) or by emailing them to [mdorrell@upei.ca](mailto:mdorrell@upei.ca). Deadline for poems is March 29th. Poems must have a title, an author, and we would really like to have them on disc because we are atrocious typistsd. Deadline for poems is March 29th.

